Town of Ellendale

Regular Meeting of Ellendale Town Council

January 8, 2025

Ellendale Fire Hall -302 Main Street

Minutes – Recorded on Apple iPad

1. **Call to order** – President Tom Panas began the meeting @ 7:00 PM
2. **Pledge of Allegiance** was recited and a **Moment of Silence** was observed
3. **Roll Call –** was taken and the following council members were present**:**

**Tom Panas – President**

**Clay Walton – Vice President**

**Bob Billbrough – Treasurer**

**Sam Noto – Secretary**

**Joe Beck – Council Member at Large**

1. **Approval of Agenda** – A motion was made to approve the agenda by Bob Billbrough and was seconded by Clay Walton. A Roll Call Vote was then taken to approve the agenda: Clay Walton - yes, Joe Beck - yes, Bob Billbrough - yes, Tom Panas - yes, Sam Noto - yes.
2. **Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes** – there was no transcription of the previous meeting minutes for review or approval at this time.
3. **Treasurer’s Report** – As of November 30, 2024 was given by current Treasurer Terrie Ottomano.
4. **Police Chief’s Report** – The monthly report was given by Chief Bruce Von Gorres.
5. **Town Clerk’s Report** – to be given at the next meeting by Town Clerk Karen Brittingham.
6. **President’s Report** – President Tom Panas announced a set of goals that the council will be striving to achieve during the 2025 year:
* Complete updates to the charter
* A consideration for changing the timetable for town voting to occur in October.

Have the letters of intent come in during August, have all the letters and documentation submitted and time to perform background checks of the candidates.

* Completion of the Employee Handbook
* Update the Policies and Procedures Manual
* Move forward with the Code Enforcement and Procedures
* Along with the new Annexations that have occurred we will have a new survey and maps of the town which will thus indicate the new town limits.
* We will hold the developers to pre-construction meetings getting progress reports from them and if there are any issues then they will be addressed at that time.
* In 2025, we will address the new location for a Town Hall with a Police Station and Maintenance Facility. We will begin working with our Engineers and Developers to get a game plan to move forward due to the growth of the town
* We will finish the Town Security System. It is believed that we are on the last step with the cameras and the building resolved with the energy company.
* With the Town Manager keeping town operations running smoothly, it is believed that some council members can have the opportunity to attend county and state meetings which will be very beneficial to the town of Ellendale.
* Completing and updating the filing system. Every parcel unit will be formatted in the same way with all the information for that parcel in one file.

Thank you, and we look forward to a successful 2025.

1. **Committee Reports**:
* **Community Outreach** – Terrie Ottomano reported on the various events that recently occurred in November, December and January 1st New Year’s Day. Events included the town Christmas Tree Lighting and Caroling, a Cookie Walk and Crafts at the Ellendale Fire Station, Toy Collection for distribution and the Annual New Year’s Day Parade. Details of her report are attached. No meeting will be held in January. The next meeting will be held in February. Question from Joe Beck regarding the Paige’s Kindness Project > are those presents distributed in Ellendale, Delaware, Sussex County? Terrie Ottomano responded that the presents are distributed in the Milford School District. So, there could be some Ellendale children.
* **Police and Emergency Response Committee –** Per Tom Panas**:** The committee chair is not here; but, I can say that we did not have a meeting in December. We are scheduled for a meeting in January and are trying to regroup moving forward for this year. Terrie Ottomano pointed out that it is too late to schedule the meeting in January since we are past the posted announcement date. Tom responded that the meeting will then be scheduled for February.
* **Vistor Recognition –** Tom Panas announced that at this time, anyone wishing to address the council may do so. They will be given two minutes to speak with no rebuttal from the council.

Terrie Ottomano – It makes my heart smile to see five council members, welcome Bob, welcome back Sam. I know this, I get good vibes from all of you gentlemen. I’m happy to say thank you for taking your time to campaign and to give your time this next year.

Karen Brittingham – I just want to respond as a person and to follow up on Paige’s Kindness Project. Not only is it the Milford School District which I am very involved with since my grandchildren are in that school district and I know what they do; but, they are also involved with police department making sure that children who are in the middle trauma are protected and provided security, stuffed animals, blankets and whatever that is needed to give them some peace of mind. So, Paige’s Kindness Project not only does the Milford School District, the Milford Police Department and the support that they get from the police department some of the victims which is unbelievable. So, I thank you for your support of that particular project and I encourage you to continue that support.

Donnie Dutton – Ellendale. I just want to talk about what Terrie said about the full council again. Starting off here in January, you guys, Mr. Billbrough and Mr. Noto for your win and looking forward seeing you sitting up there for two years or longer. Thank you, guys, all of you from Kayla all the way down.

1. Old Business:
2. The Ponder Road Update – Kayla Adkins, Town Manager: we had a meeting with DelDOT and discussed different options on how to maintain and resolve the issue of road damage by the continued use of larger vehicles going up and down that road. We are in the process of researching how we could survey or basically restrict large vehicles from using that road as a thruway.
3. Ferel Cat Program Update – Terrie Ottomano: On Decemb 16th, Ellendale held it’s first Ferel Cat Clinic. Humane Animal Partners brought their mobile surgical unit and we had 21 cats spayed, neutered and given rabies and distemper vaccines. It’s a lot of work for the residents and Clay and Jamie put in a lot of time. We are thinking of using Humane Animal Partners for vaccination clinics with their mobile unit and I’ve reached out to Forgotten Cats which is a group that takes care of the trapping, spaying and returning. They do all the work. You just tell them where the colonies are located in the town and they set up the traps. Any cats that are friendly or considered kittens, they take them to places they have for adoption. If they are true feral cats, then they are returned to the places that they were taken. Tom Panas question regarding if they pick up someone’s family pet: Terrie – I would assume family pets are already chipped, spayed and neutered; Clay Walton – if it’s not got a collar, not tattooed and not chipped, then it could potentially be adopted. Terrie – cats are not supposed to be running around at large. Once the weather breaks, I am hoping to plan another clinic.
4. New Business:
5. Appointment of Planning Commission Member – Tom Panas said that we have an opening on the Planning Commission, so we will be posting on the website and Facebook page for people to come into the Town Hall and fill out a letter of intent to be on the Planning and Zoning Commission. There will be a 15 day deadline to apply once posted. Clay – if we meet the 15 day deadline, then we could appoint at the next meeting.
6. David & Patricia Tucker Property – Tom Panas yielded to Karen Brittingham: this pretty much is an issue dealing with partial properties. We began taxing a year ago notifying all of the partial property owners and came up with a procedure that if the property consisted of buildable lot located in the town of Ellendale, then you would be taxed. We sent notifications out to that effect and then followed it up with the tax bills. Mr. and Mrs. Tucker apparently, when they received their bill, spoke with someone who gave them some incorrect information and as a result they did not pay their bill. When they got an overdue bill, they began questioning what was going on. I went over it with him explaining to him that he had a buildable piece of property and that he could put two if not three lots upon that property and he came in and is contesting that the line that was established was established as per Sussex County’s air photos. He is questioning that the amount of land is not part of his property. So therefore, dated December 5th, 2024 as the property owner of parcel # 230-27.00-24.01 we are in disagreement the existing frontage and density is not a buildable lot under Ellendale’s ordinance and zoning code. Further evidence that supports our contention would be revealed in a reevaluation and reassessment of the property located within the town limit. Therefore, we the property owners are requesting that the portion of property be reevaluated and reassessed sincerely David Tucker and Patricia Tucker. Basically, this is something that I wanted to bring to council tabling their tax bill and should be resolved with a physical survey. The survey right now is under performance for the Town of Ellendale based on annexations which may or may not answer this question. If not, then Mr. and Mrs. Tucker are then responsible for their own survey. But, in the meantime, I am asking council about tabling their tax bill and their responsibilities with no tax bill, interest or penalties until this issue is resolved.

President Tom Panas suggested we table their tax bill till it is resolved. Karen would be more comfortable if you did that as a motion in the minutes so that she can provide it to the Tuckers. Clay Walton stated do we have his assurance that when that line is established via survey and if that coincides with Sussex county records that he will move forward with correcting the deficiency. Karen – yes, he is aware that if it is a buildable lot, then he will be taxed as is consistent with other parcels. He will respect our survey and if that doesn’t suffice will have to do his own survey and will pay the taxes to the Town of Ellendale. Tom asked for a motion. Clay made a motion to table his liability until the clarification of the property’s boundaries. Joe Beck seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Clay Walton – yes; Joe Beck – yes; Bob Billbrough – yes; Tom Panas – yes; Sam Noto -yes.

Timeline: couple months until the survey is completed.

1. Correspondence

Tom Panas – at this point, there is no correspondence to bring forward

1. Executive Session

Tom Panas – We are in no need of an Executive Session

1. Possible Action on Executive Session – No action necessary
2. Adjournment – Tom Panas – I would like a motion to adjourn this meeting. Motion to adjourn – Bob Billbrough and seconded by Joe Beck. Roll call: Tom Panas – aye, Clay Walton – aye, Sam Noto – aye, Bob Billbrough – aye, Joe Beck – aye.

Meeting Adjourned @ 7:27 PM.

Minutes transcribed by Council Secretary Sam Noto January 13 and 14, 2025